

close to the tour because Gerlinde and Peter knew where all the best stuff was located. Divers who ran low on air were sent to the surface along the float line towed by the dive master, permitting those of us who breathe sea water to prolong our dives. Surfacing divers were picked up by the boat as they came up. We saw a dozen nurse sharks of all sizes at Shark Reef, and encountered turtles on several dives. In addition to the normal small reef fish, we found two honeycomb cowfish, a spotted trunkfish, many barracuda and a host of beautiful blue sponges. There were two small spotted eels peering from their holes and a variety of anemones and tube worms. Gerlinde told me that they do encounter whales in season and sometimes dolphin. (We saw several schools of dolphins as we sailed north from Grenada) Rental equipment, like their boat, was nearly new, well cared for and in excellent condition. Peter will pick divers up from nearby resorts; he is extremely punctual! Had I know that Aquanauts will outfit a diver for a two-tank trip for only \$15, I would have taken only my mask and camera. (Two boat dives cost \$60.)

GUADELOUPE

Guadeloupe lies south of Antigua and north of Dominica. Because it's a French-speaking island, English-speaking tourists often have difficulty getting by. . . . Although there's wonderful shopping, a wealth of music and art, and the cuisine's out of this world, the diving is only average. Les

Heures Saines (or "the quiet hours") is among the best operations at Pigeon, and they speak some English. . . . The French diving rules are a bit quirky. Unless you're a divemaster yourself, which allows you great freedom, you must dive with a guide. . . .

Les Heures Saines at the Cousteau Reserve, Auberge de la Vielle Tour on Grand Terre, August 2000, Bob Morris (morrisr1@war.wyeth.com) Wayne, PA. Vis: 40-100 ft. Water: calm and flat. Logged dives: 70. The Cousteau Reserve is barely one-half mile from shore. Due to the rocky, volcanic nature of the island, shore diving is not allowed. The topography underwater appears to be coral growing on hardened lava, unlike what I've seen in other Caribbean dives. There were many unusual fish including a spotted snake eel, many spotted drum, many boxfish, several species of filefish, spotted moray, stone crab, spiny lobster and scorpionfish. There were schools of Atlantic spadefish and horse-eye jacks and many trumpet fish. Since an active volcano is on this island (Mt. Soufrieré), we saw hot water springs at the reef base in 50 ft. of water. This is not a country high on the list of "must-see" dive sites but the reserve was very interesting due to the number of unusual fish while lacking many of the regular Caribbean species (few angelfish, butterflyfish, parrotfish, triggerfish, etc.) The reef was in excellent condition with many colorful sponges, corals and gorgonians. The visibility was 100 ft. every dive except

the day after a hurricane (8-21-2000) brushed the north side of the island, when the visibility was down to 40 ft. and the surface was choppy.

Guadeloupe is a French department (similar to a U.S. state) so the roads, water, highway signs and all infrastructure are first class. Since my dive buddy was my French girlfriend, I do not have a good idea of how easy it would have been to try to operate in English. There are many good restaurants that combined local ingredients with French style cooking. The islands of Grand Terre and Basse Terre are separated by a hundred yard salt water channel bridged by a highway. Most resorts are on the more populated Grand Terre. Basse Terre is more uninhabited with the volcano, Mt. Soufrieré, dominating the interior along with an extensive rain forest. It has black volcanic sand beaches and small towns around the periphery of the island. Our resort on Grand Terre (Auberge de la Vielle Tour) was not dive-related. It was near the airport and the center of commerce so we walked most nights for dinner. There is a very nice aquarium in the same area. Many nice sites on the coast worth driving to see. **(Ph: 0590 98 86 63; fax : 0590 98 77 76; e-mail heusaine@outremer.com; website www.heures-saines.gp)**

Private Yacht, March 2001, Stephen Cushman, San Diego, CA. We dived from our yacht at Pigeon Island and the Cousteau Preserve. We dove there several years ago and loved it, but the locals have destroyed the area by using gill nets in the preserve and by

multiple boats fishing on the dive moorings. There is now little to see and makes me sick. We left after two days. I have since talked to Jean-Michel Cousteau about this problem. He said that his Dad once dove there and they named the “preserve” without his permission or concurrence and we should write magazines about this problem.

HONDURAS

All dive resorts are on the Bay Islands: Roatán, Guanaja, Utila, Cayos Cochinos, and other small cayes. . . . Honduras is home to the world's most aggressive no-see-ums; they bite, bite, bite, and many people have serious allergic reactions to the bites. Those who are unprepared — meaning DEET — often find their vacations ruined. . . . The diving features great walls, offshore seamounts, and excellent coral and gorgonians, although there are few large fish or lobsters due to overfishing. . . . Whale sharks are seen near Utila. . . . There's limited access to beach diving except at CocoView and Fantasy Island on Roatán, and Plantation Beach on Cayos Cochinos. . . . The rainy season is October through February, and northers can disrupt the diving. . . . TACA often overbooks, so reconfirm flights (which may not help) and carry essentials as TACA loses or delays luggage. . . . Spanish is spoken on the mainland, English in the Bay Islands. . . . Classic Central American